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PROGRAM Martin Agronsky's Washington STATION WTOP TV

DATE September 17, 1969 6:00 PM CITY Washington, DC

CIA DIRECTOR BACKS STATION CHIEF

AGRONSKY: Eight House Democrats lead by Congressman Paul Rogers of Florida, have asked Army Secretary Stanley Resor to personally take over the controversial case involving the alleged murder of a Vietnamese double agent by eight Army Green Berets.

Up until now, the Congressmen charge, the case has been characterized by inter-service rivalry, bureaucratic mismanagement and an irresponsible disregard for the rights of the accused soldiers.

TOM BRADEN: The Green Berets accused of murder seems likely to further embarrass our country in this embarrassing war.

Colonel Robert Reault has engaged Edward Williams, one of the best known trial attorneys in the nation, to come to his defense.

So this insures that the trial will be highly publicized and hard faught.

Moreover, Williams will try to prove that the whole affair is at least partly the result of intelligence network for the same government tripping over each other's heals.

The facts now seem to be as follows:

In late 1963, the Green Berets took over a CIA operation aimed at denying Viet Cong infiltration from neutral Cambodia. They also took over a CIA agent. Later, they believed that the man had, as the phrase goes, in the secret world, turned.

In the course of their handling of him, he died.

The CIA station chief in Vietnam was curious. From his standpoint, a brave and loyal agent had been murdered. He went right to the top. At first, Army Chief Creighton Abrams wanted to hush-up the affair.

But CIA Director, Richard Helms decided to back up his station chief. Thus an

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embarrassing public trial seems certain unless Army Secretary Resor or Defense Secretary Laird or perhaps even the President himself steps in to halt it.

Bureaucratic struggles between intelligence agencies are nothing new. They occurred in World War II and during the cold war.

But those were popular wars. Ideology confronted ideology. Whatever the mistakes, most Americans thought it important that our side win.

Vietnam is not quite the same thing. A bungled war, further bungled by a bungled murder is not likely to be admired by readers this winter.

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